AER GAINS Video Series – Gathering Valid and Reliable Evidence to Inform Professional Judgment

Segment 3 – Triangulating the Evidence (16:19)

Narrator: Assessment for learning and as learning engages teachers and students in generating a continuous flow of information about learning.

Teachers need to gather valid evidence of learning by purposely planning learning tasks that align precisely with goals and criteria.

When evidence is also triangulated, using multiple sources such as conversations, observations and products, it becomes more reliable.

Gathering valid and reliable evidence for assessment of learning both informs and supports teacher professional judgement when determining a grade that reflects students' achievement.

Narrator: While teachers attend to the validity of their evidence; the reliability is equally important when judging student performance.

Cindy: How are we going to k now that they're meeting their learning goal? What evidence is going to allow us to see? What are we going to be looking for? Maybe we make a list of what we're looking for, and then what are the tools that we're going to use. Maybe we need to do like a brainstorming of the evidence that we're looking for.

Kelly: Is there an opportunity here for us to have more than one way to assess how the students are doing?

Narrator: Reliability is defined 'as the degree to which an assessment is consistent and stable in measuring what it is intended to measure.

Suzanne: One of the things that we talked about in our planning is the students being able to identify, or, and to create and include relevant details. So if we give them a template that allows them to look at a PSA and identify what relevant details are included in that PSA. If we give them that opportunity and we give them the template, we can use that template to demonstrate that they are either understanding relevant details or we need to go back and re-teach or, or have that further conversation with them.

Kelly: Exactly, and if they show us from that that they are understanding, then they can take that template and apply it to their media form, which we

can look at and have a conversation with them about.

Cindy: They'll have an opportunity to demonstrate an understanding of relevant details when they're completing that template, and then later on, when they're producing their own or creating their own.

Narrator: So then, what can teachers do with their students to increase their confidence?

Cindy: In terms of the evidence, the template that they're using will be like a product, but then while they're actually using that, we can engage into some conversations with them, which will even give us another way of, you know, assessing them, in terms of how well they're progressing towards their learning goal. We're kind of using two pieces of evidence there, using that one template.

Tammy: You can keep track on video using your software program and you have the paper version with the template. It's a great idea.

Suzanne: One of the software programs I have – you can actually record their voices, you can take a picture of their work and then you can write or type in anecdotal notes. So it's easy for me to go back and see "okay they demonstrated a clear understanding" or "I need to back and have a conversation with them because they're not ready to demonstrate that learning". They need additional support.

Narrator: When evidence is collected from three different sources (observations, conversations and products) over time, trends and patterns become apparent, and the reliability and validity of our classroom assessments is increased. This process is called triangulation.

Tammy: When the students are doing peer feedback using their success criteria, it gives us the opportunity to observe what's going on. We can record their conversation, to see what they understand, what they're analyzing, what they're defining, you k now, evaluating.

Suzanne: Being the quiet observer, if I see the conversation is not focused on the success criteria, I can kind of intervene for a moment, look at that criteria, and then sit back and see: can they take my feedback and directly apply it in that conversation. So it gives them more ownership.

Narrator: Triangulating evidence using multiple and varied methods, sources and tasks helps reveal the most consistent trends in performance.

Kelly: When you're able to sit back and observe, or even when you're

engaged in one-on-one conversation, the students are getting much stronger at recording the feedback you're giving them. They're taking ownership of it, and then they're reflecting on it, and it acts as one more piece of evidence when we triangulate everything together.

Narrator: Multiple sources and multiple opportunities help confirm what has been learned, identify emerging patterns and trends, expose gaps in the learning and evidence, inform teacher professional judgement, and validate decisions when assessing or evaluating.

Suzanne: Sometimes they have the knowledge and you have the evidence of the knowledge, but maybe the final product, they didn't have the skills to – if it's a video – to create a video. So maybe in the messaging, they lost the messaging through techniques, 'cause they didn't understand techniques, but you know that they understand messaging because you have that evidence. So that way, when you are giving that evaluated mark, you are looking at the triangulation of all of the data that you have collected over the conversations, observations, and then looking at the product as well.

Kelly: If they're trying to film their PSA but it's just not executed the way they want it through the technology, it's not fair to simply say "Oh, no you don't understand, because this, just this, isn't showing me". Exactly, if they can explain in that conversation or from us observing – no, they had a clear, effective message, they have the true facts, they've supported it, they've ensured that everything's, uh – the conventions and techniques support their target audience.

Narrator: Conversation and observations linked to learning goals and criteria invite teachers to listen and to observe what and how students are learning.

Kelly: So we've come up so far with two excellent pieces of criteria; we've separated our level 1 and our level 4 to start our rubric. What we'll do now as we continue to work on our Public Service Announcements, we'll be able to use this to peer- and self-assess each other, and to give each other feedback, and also for me to be able to come around and discuss it with you. So it will give me an opportunity to come around and have a conversation with you and monitor how you're doing as we move through the res t of our task.

Narrator: They develop a shared understanding of the learning, the criteria and the evidence to be demonstrated.

Tammy: When you c o-create the success criteria, right, they can use that success criteria to critique the work and add extra feedback for them.

Cindy: They co- constructed it with you; they understand it and they're comfortable using it. It's in their own language.

Suzanne: You can use your conversations and observations to give them feedback on their feedback. So that perhaps they're not referring to the success criteria, or even referring to the rubric, we can have that conversation with them on an individual level, or as a small group or a whole group, on how to use that success criteria and the rubric effectively.

Narrator: Students understand how the information will be used; to improve learning or to evaluate performance.

Kelly: While you're having that conversation while you're able to record, the students can also write down: "oh, my feedback is" or "my next steps are". So they can understand, so you're both at a common understanding of what should be done next.

Cindy: And you're using that product to keep referring to during your conversation. So if you notice that they need additional support in that area, you can always refer back to what they did. So you always have a visual for them to go back.

Tammy: You can even have the student watch their own video, you know with the success criteria or the rubric, and they can self-assess.

Narrator: Teachers collaboratively plan and selectively time conversations and/or observations with their students to gather assessment information, to inform professional judgement and to make decisions.

Kelly: So Amy, I wanted to come sit with you 'cause you had just mentioned to me that you're all finished.

Amy: I have my dialogue and everybody who's going to be in my play. I wrote a little thing about what I want exactly to happen.

Kelly: Are these your scenes or just your script? Amy: I just wanted to focus on the message more than what people are saying.

Kelly: Can you pull out your graphic organizer and your success criteria? Can you show me everything we have so far? So we can talk about how it relates back to the learning goal. I'd like to focus on a couple of pieces of our success criteria, and I'd like you to show me what you've learned and

what you have in your PSA.

Narrator: Triangulating assessment of learning does not alter what students are to know and be able to do; but rather varies the sources and the methods used to gather the evidence and demonstrate the learning.

Suzanne: I'm going to gather evidence to help me with my next steps of where we need to go, and also to use as an evaluation if you are ready.

Now, Alec and Faith, I'd like you to engage in a conversation about the message and the evidence. And Faith, you're going to provide some descriptive feedback based on our rubric. I'm going to be recording your conversation.

Alec: My message is that videogame addiction can happen anywhere and that it can destroy lives. And there's help out there and you can stop your addiction.

Faith: Do you have any evidence that would be relevant?

Alec: I have some research, and 1 in 10 youth gamers, so 8-18, are addicted to videogames in America. And teenagers often are addicted.

Suzanne: Faith, what do you notice about his evidence, based on the rubric?

Faith: That the facts are relevant to the message. And that they would help persuade whatever the target audience is... any challenges that you'd face.

Alec: Videogame addiction isn't actually considered a mental illness, so people who research mental illnesses don't actually consider videogame addiction to be something that could be medically helped. So there has to be other organizations that can help treat it. And it's also not covered as much by media compared to something like smoking. It hasn't raised as much awareness as other things. I want to use facts that display statistics about usage or age groups that use technology or could abuse it.

Narrator: Conversations and observations differ from products only in what is said - conversations and what is seen - observations. The learning goals, success criteria and rubric remain the same when evaluating achievement of the curriculum expectations.

Kelly: Because we've modelled – because we've sat with the students and we've modelled what a conversation looks-- a learning conversation looks like, around the success criteria, I find the students are really comfortable

giving each other peer feedback and they're so engaged in their conversations, we can bring whatever device we would like to have to record those conversations and we can really see the learning that's happening just between them.

Narrator: Multiple sources, such as observations and conversations, enhance the reliability of the evidence by:

accessing the full range of their learning; by corroborating existing or limited evidence; by identifying gaps in the learning or the evidence; by reducing the margin of error; and by accommodating a student's preferred learning style.

Kelly: So it sounds like all the different varieties of media text that you guys have shared with me is asking you to produce a product. Do you think there are other ways that we could also show what you've learned? Amy?

Amy: I think there are other ways to show what we've learned. You could also watch what we made too, but, you could talk to us about it and maybe carry on a conversation.

Kelly: When would I have the conversation with you?

Matthew: If we have an open conversation before we're actually done the project, it will help us improve while we're going on the way throughout the project.

Narrator: The quality of the evidence is enriched when students are given choice in how to demonstrate their learning; and when they are ready to present their best work.

Suzanne: So Greg, why did you choose to do a media form in the form of a poster as opposed to a video?

Greg: It's much easier to put down the message in a poster.

Suzanne: What would be some of the challenges that you would have had if you had to do a video?

Greg: Like sound, and getting all, like, editing parts that were messed up in the video.

Joe: We'll probably have a better chance of doing our best work, other than using a video, because we find that we'd be more successful making a poster.

Suzanne: And why are you more successful making a poster?

Joe: We're more comfortable in that – using that media form.

Suzanne: So basically, this task is about delivering a message to our target - our target audience. Its not about the media form, it's about the message. And by giving you choice —

Greg: Yeah, making it easier to send that message to persuade the target audience.

Suzanne: So boys, it's really not about how well you draw or how creative you are with technology, it's about sending the message to a target audience.

Narrator: Ultimately, what teachers really need to know, from a reliability perspective, is, "Do I have enough information here to make a reasonable decision about this student with regard to this domain of information or expectations? "

Kelly: The way students know that it's time to move from assessment for learning to assessment of learning is that, because we've had multiple conversations or perhaps we've had anecdotal notes or there's been recorded feedback – either verbally or they've written it themselves or I've written it for them – they know that they have to meet that success criteria. So I may go in thinking I'm going to evaluate, sit down, have a conversation with my students, and or student – or could be a group, it could be a whole class-- and upon those conversations and the questions that will pull out their learning, discover that they're not ready. And if they're not ready, then that's my feedback, then I need to go back and work on this and either A) give them more time or B) create a lesson that will enable them to understand better. I may go in thinking that they're not ready to be evaluated, have a conversation with them and realize, you know what, they've met the criteria, they're ready, they're finished.

Narrator: What constitutes enough evidence may vary from one student to the next, depending on:

- the level of consistency in the performance;

- the inconsistency in the performance;

- the discernible trends in the overall performance;

- the gaps in the evidence or;

- the teachers' confidence in the body of evidence.

Cindy: We know ahead of time the learning that we want – there isn't going to be any surprises. We knew ahead, ahead of time that those were the expectations. And by knowing that, we know exactly the assessment, what we'll be assessing and it helps us to pick out those best assessment strategies and tools to use to gather that evidence of that expectation. We know ahead of time, already before we even get to the end, that they will get it, and how they're getting it, and when they're getting it, and what's allowing them to actually meet these expectations.

Narrator: Triangulating evidence speaks to, "the essential reliability issue: Is there enough information here?